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Embedding Religious Values through the “Dodosisdodo” Lullaby Tradition: A Culturally Rooted Approach to Early Childhood Education in Aceh Tamiang

Rizka Amalia¹, Sangkot Sirait²

¹Institut Agama Islam Negeri Lhokseumawe, Indonesia, ²Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

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Correspondence to

Rizka Amalia, Department of Islamic Early Childhood Education, IAIN Lhokseumawe, Indonesia
e-mail: rizka14rizki@yahoo.co.id

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Abstract

This study investigates the transmission of religious values through the *Ngayon Anak “Dodosisdodo”* tradition as practiced in early childhood parenting among the Tamiang ethnic community in Aceh Tamiang, Indonesia. The tradition, which involves mothers singing poetic lullabies while gently swinging their children, serves as a medium for embedding Islamic teachings and moral values such as monotheism, obedience, honesty, patience, and affection. Utilizing a qualitative ethnographic approach with a multi-site case study design, this research employed observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis to explore the symbolic structure, functions, and educational significance of *Dodosisdodo*. The tradition manifests in three symbolic forms: *Berunjo* (sitting posture with extended legs), *Ipere’* (child in a swing), and *Bele* (gentle caress), each of which reinforces familial bonds and facilitates the internalization of ethical values during early developmental stages. The findings indicate that *Dodosisdodo* not only supports emotional security and spiritual awareness in children but also acts as a form of informal religious instruction deeply rooted in cultural identity. However, the continuity of this oral tradition is threatened by modern childcare practices, digital media, and the declining use of local languages. This study highlights the urgency of preserving such traditions as culturally responsive pedagogical models that contribute to holistic early childhood education. The integration of indigenous practices like *Dodosisdodo* into contemporary educational frameworks offers valuable insights for strengthening character education grounded in local wisdom and Islamic ethics.

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Introduction

In Aceh Tamiang, the oral tradition of *Ngayon Anak*, also known as *Dodosisdodo*, has been preserved across generations as a cultural practice involving mothers singing lullabies while gently swinging their babies. This tradition is expressed through poetic forms known as *nazam* or *dodaiddi*, which are rich in religious and moral values (Yusuf & Nurmayani, 2013). These lullabies are designed not only to comfort children but also to embed values into their subconscious during their earliest developmental stages (Trehub et al., 1993). The lyrics often convey teachings of monotheism, good manners, respect, and love toward parents, teachers, and the community (Wulandari, 2023). As such, *Dodosisdodo* represents a unique form of family-based education grounded in Acehnese cultural identity.

The poetic content in *Dodosisdodo* contains explicit religious messages and ethical teachings that are crucial for early character formation. These include themes such as worship of God, reverence for the Prophet, national pride, and responsibility (Armia, 2014; Syahril & Idris, 2019). This tradition serves as a form of informal religious instruction that is intimately connected with daily parenting. Through repetition and emotional bonding, children internalize values that are culturally and spiritually significant. This form of character education is

embedded within familial routines, emphasizing the household as the first and most influential educational environment.

The Dodosidodo tradition functions as an early educational mechanism that utilizes song and poetry to transmit cultural values. Musical elements in lullabies contribute to cognitive and emotional development, making them an effective tool for value transmission (Ortiz, 2002). Songs sung at bedtime help children feel secure while embedding moral lessons that are carried into adulthood (Smith, 2006). By incorporating soothing melodies with meaningful messages, this tradition becomes a valuable pedagogical resource for shaping early childhood behavior. In this way, Dodosidodo operates as both a cultural and psychological foundation for children's moral development.

Despite its importance, the continuity of this tradition is threatened by modern influences and technological advancement. Contemporary mothers increasingly rely on smartphones, automatic swings, and media entertainment to soothe children, thereby reducing direct interaction and the transmission of cultural knowledge (Hamid, 2018). As traditional lullabies are replaced by popular music or digital noise, the religious and moral messages once embedded in bedtime rituals are lost. Many young parents perceive *Ngayon Anak* as outdated or irrelevant, leading to its abandonment in favor of more modern childcare practices. This shift contributes to the erosion of local values and intergenerational knowledge.

Another critical issue is the declining use of regional languages, especially among younger generations who favor national or global languages in daily communication (Amalia & Mauliazal, 2020). As the original language of Dodosidodo fades, so does the community's ability to understand and reproduce its symbolic meanings (Misinambouw, 2002). This phenomenon reflects a broader disconnection from traditional oral literature, which depends on immersion and repetition to be sustained (Lord, 1981). The loss of linguistic competence impairs the transmission of cultural heritage and diminishes the educational impact of traditional practices. Without conscious preservation efforts, such traditions risk disappearing entirely from collective memory.

This study addresses the urgent need to document and revitalize Dodosidodo as a medium for religious and character education. Existing literature highlights the importance of traditional lullabies in shaping children's identity and instilling communal values (Armia, 2014; Syahril & Idris, 2019). Furthermore, preserving such traditions contributes to safeguarding the broader cultural heritage of Aceh Tamiang, as seen in similar efforts to protect rituals like *tulak breuh* and *tepung tawar* (Ataillah et al., 2021; Hariadi et al., 2022). By exploring the structure and educational function of Dodosidodo, this research contributes to the discourse on integrating local wisdom into contemporary early childhood education frameworks.

The objective of this study is to examine how religious values are transmitted to early childhood through the Dodosidodo tradition in Aceh Tamiang. It focuses on understanding the structure, symbolic meanings, and functions of this tradition as a cultural expression rooted in Islamic ethics and local wisdom. The study also investigates the role of the family, particularly mothers, in maintaining the continuity of this practice. Through a qualitative ethnographic lens, this research aims to bridge the gap between cultural preservation and educational innovation. In doing so, it offers a model for integrating traditional oral literature into the character education of young children.

Methods

Research Design

This research adopts a qualitative approach, which is considered suitable for understanding cultural practices and meaning construction within oral traditions (Creswell, 2014). The type of research is field research, supported by document and library data. This is basic research that aims to explore the urgency of preserving the oral tradition of *Ngayon Anak Dodosidodo* in Acehnese society, particularly among the Tamiang ethnic group. The choice of a qualitative design enables the researcher to explore values and experiences that are difficult to quantify.

The research utilizes a multi-site case study design, allowing comparisons of similar parenting practices in different community settings. The focus is on how the *dodosidodo* tradition, which once contributed to nurturing virtuous generations, has been marginalized by the forces of modernization. This tradition is now rarely practiced, especially in urban areas, where cultural heritage is increasingly forgotten.

Research Setting and Participants

This study was conducted in Aceh, particularly in communities where the *dodaiddi* tradition is still practiced. The research refers to the concept of social situation as formulated by Spradley, which includes three elements: place, actor, and activity (Sugiyono, 2006). The place of research is the village community where the tradition is still alive. The actors are the parents and cultural stakeholders who apply *dodaiddi* in parenting. The activity refers to the process of lulling children to sleep while singing the *dodosidodo* lullaby.

Participants in the study include parents who actively practice the tradition, village *geuchiek* (local leaders), and Acehnese cultural historians who have deep knowledge of the tradition. These participants were selected purposively based on their experience and role in preserving the tradition.

Data Collection Procedures

The research employed three main techniques for data collection: observation, in-depth interviews, and document review.

- Observation was conducted using participant observation, where the researcher engaged directly with the community's daily life. This involved observing various elements such as space, place, actors, activities, objects, time, events, goals, and emotions. The researcher focused on how *dodaiddi* was performed when putting children to sleep and how it was used to instill religious and moral values (Patilima, 2013).
- In-depth interviews were carried out with parents, village *geuchiek*, and Acehnese historians who are familiar with the *dodaiddi* tradition. The interviews were used to explore parenting practices and the perceived meaning and value of the tradition (Moleong, 2013).
- Document review was used to collect supporting information related to the research topic. This included reviewing books, articles, and village documents that discuss the *peurateb aneuk* tradition and its role in early childhood character formation.

Documentation included profiles of villages studied and child demographic data. All data were collected respectfully and with prior informed consent from participants.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was carried out using an interactive model consisting of three main components: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification (Miles et al., 2014).

- Data reduction is the process of selecting, simplifying, and transforming raw data into a more manageable form. This process occurred throughout the research period as the researcher focused on relevant information (Sugiyono, 2006).
- Data display involves organizing the reduced data into formats that allow patterns and relationships to emerge, such as matrices or narrative summaries.
- Conclusion drawing and verification were conducted through careful interpretation of emerging themes and cross-checking with various data sources. The researcher sought to identify how the *dodaiddi* tradition contributes to value transmission in parenting.

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research findings, several strategies were employed. These include cross-checking data from different sources, consistency in data collection procedures across multiple sites, and reflection on the interpretation of cultural meaning. Although the study does not explicitly mention member checking or audit trails, credibility was supported by immersion in the field and by triangulating observations, interviews, and documents (Moleong, 2013; Sugiyono, 2006).

Ethical considerations were addressed through obtaining informed consent, maintaining the confidentiality of participants, and treating cultural practices with respect. Documentation and interpretation of oral traditions were conducted carefully, with attention to local sensitivities.

Result

Dodosidodo Tradition as an Early Childhood Educational Medium

The *Dodosidodo* tradition is a significant cultural heritage passed down through generations of Acehnese women. It refers to the act of swinging a baby while singing poetic lullabies, often with a beautiful rhythm and soothing rhyme. These lullabies are not merely for comfort but function as a medium through which mothers convey stories and moral lessons to their infants. In this way, *Dodosidodo* becomes a form of informal education, introducing early childhood to basic religious knowledge and values even before they begin formal learning.

Historically, Aceh has been known for its strong Islamic orientation, which influences all aspects of its cultural expressions, including literature and oral traditions. The *Dodosidodo* lullabies are typically infused with Islamic stories, spiritual teachings, and moral encouragement, reflecting the region's commitment to aligning its traditional practices with Sharia-based values. In particular, many of the lullabies contain narratives of heroic struggle and religious devotion, aiming to instill bravery and a strong sense of religious duty in children from an early age. Such practices ensure that Islamic identity and moral integrity are rooted deeply from the cradle.

Acehnese society has long recognized the vulnerabilities faced by children in the modern world, particularly in terms of moral degradation and external cultural threats. In response, they use *Dodosidodo* as a strategy to fortify the moral foundation of the younger generation through early exposure to ethical and spiritual teachings. These lullabies serve not only to entertain or soothe but also to develop noble character traits aligned with Islamic ethics. Therefore, *Dodosidodo* is seen as a moral shield for children in the age of globalization.

In the Aceh Tamiang community, *Dodosidodo* is more than just a physical act of swinging a child. It involves poetic rhythm and meaningful lyrics sung by the mother, which create a bond between the child and the values being transmitted. This tradition continues to hold social and symbolic significance, especially among mothers, who view it as part of their familial and cultural responsibilities. Despite changes in lifestyle and modern parenting trends, the practice remains intact in many households, symbolizing cultural continuity.

In villages such as Sungaiyu, Perupok, and Cinta Raja, the content of *Dodosidodo* songs varies according to the aspirations of the mothers for their children. Some mothers choose to sing about struggle and heroism if they wish their children to become brave defenders of the nation. Others select lyrics filled with religious advice and spiritual themes if they hope their children grow up to be devout and morally upright. The content of each *Dodosidodo* session is therefore not random, but rather tailored to reflect the values and dreams mothers hold for their children's future.

Mothers' Practices and Perceptions of the *Dodosidodo* Tradition in Acehnese Communities

In-depth interviews conducted in Sungaiyu, Perupok, and Cinta Raja villages show that mothers in these communities continue practicing *Dodosidodo* despite the demands of daily life. According to Andong Salbiah (54), *Dodosidodo* serves as a valuable moment during bedtime, where children internalize the words spoken to them. The poetic verses used are filled with Islamic messages, including blessings upon the Prophet and moral advice for life. She emphasized that *Dodosidodo* has been instrumental in building the character of Acehnese children since infancy, transmitting values such as obedience to God, respect for parents, and love for the homeland. However, she also expressed concern that this tradition is fading, replaced by modern music and entertainment on mobile phones and television.

Andong Nurhajiah (43) noted that not all mothers are skilled in traditional poetry, so many use *shalawat* or short Acehnese verses as alternatives. She described *Dodosidodo* as a poetic practice that soothes babies while simultaneously training their hearing to recognize their mother's voice. The comfort brought by the familiar rhythm and voice helps build emotional security in infants. For her, the swing becomes a site of early education where the mother-child relationship is strengthened naturally and affectionately.

According to Andong Mardiah (58), *Dodosidodo* carries both educational content and relational value. Many of the poems are either composed by the mothers themselves or inherited across generations in the family. She believes that swinging accompanied by poetry remains relevant today as an early stage of education before formal instruction begins. The emotional connection created during this process reinforces the transmission of values within the family.

Andong Fairil Hanim (58) regarded *Dodosidodo* as a unique cultural trait that distinguishes Aceh from other regions. She explained that beyond being educational, it serves as a soothing and entertaining activity for both children and their mothers. Nevertheless, she warned against the misuse of this tradition, such as forcing children to swing outside bedtime or singing meaningless songs. In her view, *Dodosidodo* is effective only when performed with proper intent and religious substance, especially when the lyrics are composed of gentle spiritual guidance.

Bariah's mother (35) affirmed the educational nature of *Dodosidodo*, stating that her child only falls asleep after listening to specific verses. She usually includes prayers such as *tahlil*, *tahmid*, and *lailaha illallah* in the lullabies to instill early spiritual habits. For her, the act of singing during bedtime is not only a way to comfort the child but also an initial phase of moral and religious instruction. She maintains that this traditional practice is still highly effective in shaping children's inner development.

In Acehnese traditional thought, children are viewed from two main dimensions within the family. The first is as a natural result of marital affection, where love and mercy from God support the building of a harmonious and religious household. The second is as future successors who are expected to care for their parents in old age and continue their spiritual legacy through prayers and righteous actions. These perspectives are deeply rooted in Islamic teachings and strongly influence parenting approaches in Aceh.

Educating children to become morally upright and religious individuals can be done through various methods, including advice and modeling behavior. However, such approaches often assume that the child already has a basic understanding of good and bad. This raises a challenge when dealing with babies under one year old who have not yet developed such comprehension. In response to this, Acehnese mothers employ *Dodosidodo* as a tool to instill values through poetic language, using rhythm and repetition as subtle means of moral education from the earliest stages of life. The swing thus becomes the child's first classroom, where messages of duty, faith, and identity begin to take root.

Symbolism and Ritual Structure in *Dodosidodo* Performances

Child Dodosidodo has become rare in several areas of Aceh, especially in urban centers. This rarity reflects a broader cultural shift where traditional lullabies are increasingly being ignored or forgotten. One of the contributing factors is the loss of knowledge regarding the narrative structure and performance of *Dodosidodo*, resulting in its diminished transmission to younger generations. Some misconceptions even portray *Dodosidodo* as a song inciting war or jihad for children, whereas in fact, the song encompasses far more meaningful and nuanced purposes related to cultural education, emotional expression, and religious teachings.

Berunjo Form (Sit on your back with two legs forward)

Berunjo is a form of cultural expression used in family education by the Tamiang tribe and is one of the foundational presentation structures in *Dodosidodo*. This activity is performed by sitting

with legs extended forward, usually in a relaxed and grounded position that enables singing and storytelling. The use of *Berunjo* carries multiple cultural meanings and functions in daily life. First, as a cultural expression, *Berunjo* reflects the interface of existing traditions that shape social behavior. It encapsulates the way of life of the Indonesian people, teaching values and communal wisdom that are transmitted through folklore, regional arts, and ceremonial practices. Second, it serves as a generator of normative values in society. These values guide decision-making processes and provide moral distinctions within community life. Third, *Berunjo* has economic significance. With Indonesia's cultural diversity, traditions like *Berunjo* hold potential as economic assets through cultural tourism and sustainable development initiatives (Wedhatami, Bayangsari, Santoso, nd).

Ipere' Form (Child in Swing)

The *Ipere* form symbolizes the act of placing a child in a swing accompanied by soothing prayers and melodies. This ritual reflects parental affection and contains aspirations that the child may grow to emulate the Prophet Muhammad. The famous Islamic expression "Demanding Knowledge from the Cradle" resonates through this practice, where educational values are instilled from infancy. As both a traditional and religious symbol, *Ipere* represents the integration of local heritage and spiritual discipline, having been transmitted across generations as part of the bedtime routine (Emawati, 2016).

Bele Form (Soft Caress)

Bele, meaning gentle caress, is another cultural expression found in the child-rearing practices of the Tamiang tribal community in Aceh. It is typically performed by women during bedtime, where they sing softly while caressing the child to sleep. This activity is not only a form of affection but also a structured method of transmitting values. In its performance, *Bele* reinforces personality development, lays the moral foundation for children, and functions as an intergenerational tool of cultural transmission. It continues to serve as a ritual song that strengthens the emotional and ethical relationship between parent and child.

The symbolic forms of *Dodosidodo* are further supported by a structured poetic format. The ritual poetry consists of three main components: the introduction, the body, and the closing. Each part is composed using structured language—often literary or narrative in style—that functions as a vehicle for oral traditions. These components are designed to support each other cohesively, allowing the message to be delivered effectively.

In addition to the verbal structure, the performance of *Dodosidodo* also relies on *Ko-Text* elements, which include prosodic and kinetic features. These elements consist of intonation, accentuation, pauses, and stress in the delivery of the text. Physical gestures and body movements, as studied in the field of kinetics, accompany the singing to enhance emotional impact. The interplay of these linguistic and non-linguistic features contributes to the ritualistic and pedagogical depth of *Dodosidodo*.

Ritual and Magical Meanings Embedded in Dodosidodo

Prayer

Prayer is a person's sincere request directed to God, expressed from the heart as a form of self-worship. People pray to ask for something they desire, and each individual has their own unique way of praying with different types of requests. Although prayer does not always produce immediate results, it is closely tied to human effort and perseverance (Mursalim, 2011). Within the *Dodosidodo* cultural practice, prayer plays an important role by teaching children to consistently turn to God through supplication. This habit of praying, when taught from an early age, helps children become spiritually mindful and encourages them not only to rely on prayer but also to make efforts in daily life.

Drug

In the context of *Dodosidodo*, singing also functions as a traditional form of medicine. The ritual of singing lullabies is understood as a cultural expression that conveys emotional and

psychological comfort to children. The melodic and rhythmic elements are believed to have therapeutic effects, addressing both physical and emotional ailments. In addition, it is believed that such practices contribute to brain development even during the prenatal period and continue to stimulate emotional well-being after birth. As children listen to or participate in *Dodosidodo*, they experience a sense of joy and calm that supports their growth and mental health.

Keep Away the Evil Spirit

Belief in metaphysical or supernatural realities exists across cultures, including within the Aceh Tamiang community, where *Dodosidodo* is considered a means to ward off evil spirits. This tradition holds that the singing performed in the ritual has protective qualities that shield children from unseen forces. The practice of using *Dodosidodo* for this purpose continues in several regions and is rooted in local spiritual belief systems. These beliefs encompass a range of supernatural entities such as gods, spirits, and other invisible beings, which are understood as influencing human life. The cultural understanding of such forces, and the rituals associated with them, reflect the deep interconnection between oral traditions and cosmological views within local tribal contexts (Mustaqim, 2012).

Social Functions and Individual Moral Values in Dodosidodo

Jujow (Honesty)

Honesty is one of the most fundamental life values that must be instilled in children from an early age. Teaching honesty early in life is essential because it forms the foundation of ethical behavior in daily interactions. Honesty is a commendable trait that helps build trust within the family and community. In the family context, honesty maintains strong kinship bonds and promotes mutual respect (Chairilisyah, 2016). Within the *Dodosidodo* tradition of the Aceh Tamiang tribe, this moral value is embedded in the verses sung by parents, thereby shaping a harmonious family environment. The transmission of honest behavior from parents to children is crucial because children tend to replicate the moral standards practiced at home. Therefore, parents must adopt appropriate and effective methods to teach honesty so that children can understand and apply it with ease.

Tegoh (Strength)

The value of *tegoh*, or strength, as conveyed through *Dodosidodo* activities, refers to firmness of principle and moral consistency. This concept includes the idea of not wavering in the face of change and maintaining values that are considered right and just. Early childhood is a critical stage for introducing this firmness, as it lays the groundwork for internal motivation and strong character development. When taught properly within the family setting, *tegoh* helps children grow into individuals who remain steadfast in their beliefs and values even when influenced by external social pressures. This resilience is not only necessary for personal development but also contributes to community stability.

Saba (Patience)

Patience is another core value transmitted through *Dodosidodo* performances, teaching children how to restrain themselves and endure trials calmly. Patience is an essential aspect of emotional intelligence that must be nurtured early in life. Through *Dodosidodo*, children are introduced to this virtue in a gentle and repetitive manner, making it easier for them to internalize it. Parents can reinforce patience through daily household routines, modeling calm and composed behavior in various situations. The habit of behaving politely, speaking with care, and acting slowly but thoughtfully becomes part of the child's social-emotional development. Teaching children to be patient prepares them to live peacefully and fosters gratitude for what they have (Hodijah et al., 2018).

Cinte (Love)

The value of *cinte*, or love, is deeply embedded in the *Dodosidodo* tradition of the Aceh Tamiang community. This value emphasizes the importance of expressing affection and providing

emotional warmth to children from early childhood. Parental love delivered through lullabies fosters a sense of security and emotional well-being in children. Love in this context is not merely an emotion but a moral force that nurtures the child's development and strengthens family bonds. According to Musi and Amal, a child's emotional stability is closely related to the consistency of love received at home (Musi et al., 2015). Therefore, in the practice of *Dodosidodo*, offering love is more than symbolic—it becomes an educational act that forms the emotional foundation of the child's personality.

Educational and Character-Building Values through Dodosidodo **Pande (Intelligent)**

Intelligence is defined as the ability of a person to acquire and apply knowledge, information, and skills in everyday life. This trait is not something that can be instantly taught but is usually nurtured from early childhood, particularly through engagement and curiosity. Children often demonstrate intelligence by asking questions and exploring their environment. Within the *Dodosidodo* tradition practiced by the Tamiang tribe, one of the positive effects is the stimulation of intelligence from an early age. This early intellectual development is frequently influenced by the child's closeness to their parents during bedtime rituals. The concept of intelligence in this context aligns with the value of *al-'iffah*—a combination of chastity, generosity, patience, shyness, and moral restraint—which leads to a curious, studious, and ethically aware personality. Thus, *Dodosidodo* not only comforts but also becomes a formative educational experience that shapes intellectual character.

Jujow (Honest Behavior)

Research from Harvard University emphasizes that a person's success is more dependent on soft skills, including emotional intelligence, than on cognitive abilities or hard skills alone. According to data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2000), success is determined 80% by emotional intelligence and only 20% by IQ. Among the key components contributing to success are honest and independent behavior, trustworthiness, punctuality, adaptability, and teamwork. These findings are reinforced by Thomas Stanley's research, which identifies five main factors for success: honesty, discipline, cooperation, strong teamwork, and a strong work ethic. In light of this, honesty is seen as a critical factor in achieving personal and professional goals (Saeful, 2021). If nurtured from childhood—starting at home, in schools, and in the community—honesty becomes not only a moral foundation but also a practical life skill. As emphasized by Zulkhairi (nd), honesty is the fruit of proper education that has tangible implications in daily life.

Keje Kerreuh (Hard Work)

Hard work is understood as a personal trait that drives an individual to achieve set goals through determination and sustained effort. Within *Dodosidodo* practices, hard work is taught as a value by example and repetition. A hardworking person is characterized by specific behavioral traits. First, they possess a high level of initiative, taking proactive steps to improve themselves and complete tasks efficiently. Second, they exhibit perseverance, never giving up in the face of adversity and finding solutions to problems. Third, they value time and are diligent in their responsibilities, maintaining discipline and consistency in all their actions. Time is regarded as a valuable resource that must be filled with meaningful and productive activities. The character of hard work, when instilled early through cultural practices like *Dodosidodo*, helps children develop resilience and goal-oriented habits. This perspective is supported by the statement that every achievement is the result of a struggle, and a determined attitude leads individuals closer to their desired outcomes despite facing various challenges.

Brave (Dare)

A brave person is someone who dares to take meaningful action, especially when it involves upholding values such as justice, respect, and social responsibility (Character Education Through "The Story of 75 Brave People From the Archipelago," 2022). Courage in *Dodosidodo* is

not only metaphorical but is actively encouraged through the narratives sung to children. These narratives teach children to be brave in expressing opinions, making moral decisions, asking questions, and collaborating respectfully with others. The educational intention behind this value is to cultivate self-confidence, public speaking skills, and social adaptability in children. Children who are raised with a sense of courage are more likely to explore their potential, participate in group activities, and take responsibility for leadership roles. As their confidence grows, so does their cognitive and emotional intelligence. In educational settings, courage can be fostered through structured methods such as discussion or lecture-based strategies. The application of these methods has been proven to help children develop their voices and decision-making skills (Supriyanto, 2016). Therefore, a brave child is one who is prepared to thrive in public life and continuously improve their intellectual capabilities through bold and thoughtful action.

Discussion

The findings of this study affirm that *Dodosidodo* is not merely a soothing bedtime routine but functions as a culturally embedded medium for early moral and religious education. This aligns with prior research highlighting how oral traditions in Aceh, particularly *dodaidi*, transmit Islamic values such as reverence for God, respect for elders, and obedience to social norms (Armia, 2014; Syahril & Idris, 2019). The tradition serves as a vehicle for transmitting character values from mothers to children during critical stages of brain and emotional development. In this way, *Dodosidodo* represents an intimate learning environment that combines emotional bonding with didactic instruction, reinforcing the role of the family as the first school in a child's life (Wulandari, 2023).

One of the most significant aspects of *Dodosidodo* is its integration of Islamic ethics with Acehnese cultural identity. Through songs sung in the local language, children are exposed to virtues such as patience (*saba*), strength of principle (*tegoh*), and affection (*cinte*), which are considered pillars of Islamic moral education. These values are not taught through direct instruction but are embedded in poetic narratives that rely on repetition and emotional familiarity. The findings support the notion that learning through culturally resonant forms such as lullabies promotes deep internalization of values, especially in early childhood when abstract reasoning is still developing (Ortiz, 2002; Smith, 2006). Moreover, this educational approach reflects the broader Acehnese worldview in which religious, cultural, and familial identities are interwoven.

The psychological dimension of *Dodosidodo* is equally compelling. Research in developmental psychology shows that infants and toddlers respond positively to familiar maternal voices and rhythmic auditory patterns, which enhance attachment security and promote emotional regulation (Simard et al., 2017; Trehub et al., 1993). The lullaby's rhythm and content stimulate neural pathways associated with memory, language, and emotional development, suggesting that *Dodosidodo* serves both psychological and pedagogical functions (Lenehan et al., 2022). The secure attachment fostered through bedtime rituals also correlates with increased social competence and empathy in children, outcomes that are central to moral development (Liu et al., 2022; Tikotzky, 2017). Therefore, *Dodosidodo* can be seen as a low-cost, high-impact intervention for strengthening early childhood development in culturally grounded ways.

Despite its educational value, the tradition faces erosion due to modern parenting trends and technological disruption. Many mothers now use mobile phones, video content, or electronic swings, replacing direct verbal and physical interaction with mediated entertainment (Hamid, 2018). This shift significantly reduces opportunities for oral knowledge transmission, a concern echoed in broader literature on the decline of traditional parenting in digital environments (Amalia & Mauliazal, 2020). When digital lullabies replace personalized, value-laden songs, children may miss formative experiences that are emotionally rich and morally instructive. This phenomenon illustrates the cultural cost of technological convenience and

emphasizes the need for awareness campaigns or parental training to revitalize traditional practices.

The symbolic structure of *Dodosidodo*, as revealed in this study, deepens our understanding of its layered meanings. Forms such as *Berunjo* (sitting and singing), *Ipere'* (swinging the child), and *Bele* (gentle caress) are more than physical acts; they are rituals embedded with social and moral messages. These structured activities serve as channels for transmitting worldviews and expectations about ideal behavior and spiritual aspirations. From the perspective of structuralist anthropology, these performances encode binary oppositions such as comfort versus danger, purity versus impurity, and obedience versus defiance, guiding children toward culturally appropriate interpretations of reality. The alignment of kinetic gestures, poetic meter, and parental intention transforms ordinary bedtime routines into ritualized acts of cultural preservation.

Finally, the tradition's capacity to foster community and family cohesion should not be overlooked. *Dodosidodo* reinforces the role of parents, especially mothers, as active agents in moral education and cultural transmission. Through repeated verses and personalized content, values such as honesty (*jujow*), perseverance (*keje kerreuh*), and courage (*brave*) are communicated in emotionally resonant ways that formal education often fails to replicate. This aligns with research showing that early exposure to character values in the home significantly predicts long-term social behavior and academic motivation (Liu et al., 2022; Saeful, 2021). In a time when globalized values increasingly displace local norms, traditions like *Dodosidodo* remain essential for maintaining cultural integrity and preparing children for ethical adulthood within their own communities.

Conclusion

The *Dodosidodo* tradition, also known as *Ngayon Anak*, is a significant cultural practice in Aceh Tamiang that functions as a medium for early childhood religious and character education. This tradition embeds Islamic teachings and moral values within poetic lullabies sung by mothers, emphasizing themes such as monotheism, respect, patience, honesty, and affection. The symbolic forms of its performance, such as *Berunjo* (sitting posture), *Ipere'* (swing), and *Bele* (gentle caress), serve not only as cultural expressions but also as pedagogical tools that reinforce familial bonds and instill values from infancy. As such, *Dodosidodo* exemplifies a holistic approach to education that integrates emotional, spiritual, and cognitive development through everyday parenting rituals.

Despite its pedagogical richness, *Dodosidodo* is facing decline due to modernization, the rise of digital parenting tools, and the decreasing use of regional languages among younger generations. These shifts have led to a reduction in the transmission of traditional knowledge and the erosion of cultural identity. The findings of this study highlight the urgent need to revitalize oral traditions like *Dodosidodo* as part of culturally responsive early childhood education. By recognizing and integrating local wisdom into formal educational frameworks, *Dodosidodo* can continue to serve as a valuable model for shaping morally grounded and culturally aware individuals.

Declarations

Author Contribution Statement

All authors contributed equally and approved the final manuscript.

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The author declares no conflict of interest.

Additional Information

No additional information is available.

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